

From: Lois Laczko March 2, 2009 3:28:32 PM
Subject: Design Review Board Minutes 02/10/2009 - ADOPTED
To: SimsburyCT_DesignMin
Cc:

ADOPTED

Design Review Board Minutes
February 10, 2009
Regular Meeting

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Dahlquist called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM in the Main Meeting Room of the Simsbury Town Offices. The following members were present: Charles Stephenson, Kevin Gray, Rick Schoenhardt, John Stewart, John Carroll, Anthony Drapelick and Rita Bond. Also present were Hiram Peck, Director of Planning.

II. APPOINTMENT OF ALTERNATES

Chairman Dahlquist appointed Commissioner Carroll in the absence of Commissioner Gardner and Commissioner Drapelick in the absence of Commissioner Naccarato.

III. INFORMAL DISCUSSION

a. Site plan review for modification at a location (currently Verizon Wireless) in Avon Marketplace, 530R Bushy Hill Road.

Mr. Pilon, Architect, stated they have been working on the design for these buildings for many years. These buildings are located on Route 44. He stated that the owner would like to do some upgrades and improvements to the building and replace some of the sidewalks. They would like to update the image of the building. They will be redistributing some of the tenants also. The owner would like to get another restaurant in part of one of the buildings, which they will need a special exception for. Mr. Pilon stated that the building has many brick insets and planters and curbing, which are old and in need of replacement. He stated that the owner would like to take the traffic light out at the location of the CVS, which they feel could create a hazard. By doing this, they will be creating several new parking spaces; they would also like to redistribute the islands in this

parking area.

Mr. Pilon stated that they would like to make this site more pedestrian friendly and would like to make the surroundings of the building more aesthetically pleasing. They would also like to create an exterior dining area at the end of Bertucci's; they would like to tie this together with all new paving throughout so people will be driving on a cobblestone roadway. In order to do this, they will have to move some of the handicapped and other parking spaces because of the outdoor dining. Mr. Pilon stated that they would be modifying the whole front face of the building and putting in an awning as well. They would also like to put in small scale columns with plantings hanging from them as well as tables and umbrellas. He stated that they would also like to change the focus when entering from the mall driveway; they would like to install planters.

Mr. Pilon stated that they have not completely explored all of the lighting yet, although they continue to discuss this issue. They may want more lighting on the building. They continue to discuss additional signage as well.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned if Mr. Pilon has had any communication with the Town of Avon. Mr. Pilon stated that he has explained this approach to them; they were positive about these changes.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that the DRB would be giving constructive comments back so a final plan could be developed.

Commissioner Bond stated that she is very familiar with this area. She feels that this will be a great improvement. She suggested that they include some trees within the parking area if there is enough space. Mr. Pilon stated that they will continue discussing the plantings for the entire site. The plantings they decide upon will be self-sufficient.

Commissioner Stewart stated that he feels the visual inclusion of the two areas will be successful. He suggested having a traffic engineer look at these plans. He stated that he would like to see a more aggressive use of the concrete pavers as well.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that he feels that the proposal is going in the right direction.

Regarding a question by Commissioner Gray about the awnings, Mr. Pilon stated that the awning that is being proposed is different from the one that is currently being used for Bertucci's. They continue to research what will look the best. He stated that there definitely needs to be considerable shading in the outside dining area, although they do not want

to hide the building.

Commissioner Drapelick stated that the building is getting worn; he feels that these improvements will be attractive. He stated that he does use the driveway that they would like to eliminate.

Commissioner Carroll stated that he feels these improvements are going in the right direction. He looks forward to the final presentation.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that he would like to see a vertical form that would be set out in front of the building to give a natural element. Mr. Pilon stated that the tree that is currently in the front could be moved over to the right. Chairman Dahlquist stated that at the formal presentation, the applicant should have a good indication of what the lighting and signage will be. Mr. Pilon stated that he believes that Simsbury adopted the initial signage program that was done in Avon so they would all be the same. Chairman Dahlquist stated that Simsbury discourages the internally lit signs but are fine with back lit signage. Mr. Pilon stated that the signage for this site is back lit against the wall. He stated that he will look into these issues.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that no action will be taken on this tonight.

b. Powder Forest Homes, LLC, proposed design changes to overall conceptual plan for the Powder Forest site.

Andy DiFatta, President of Powder Forest Homes, LLC, stated that he would like this informal to be changed to a formal presentation. Chairman Dahlquist stated that after the informal presentation, the Board could make that determination.

Mr. DiFatta stated that at the last meeting, he was incorrect in saying that they did not want to change lines on the plan. He stated that the lines get fixed when the unit is declared; they are not fixed prior to that. He stated that people would rather have a freestanding home and have individual driveways.

Mr. DiFatta showed the Board the proposed plan depicting the broken apart duplexes. He stated that they have kept the distances within the code requirements. In one section of the Bantry neighborhood, he stated that when separating the driveways, he stated that he did leave 2 of the driveways shared and broke apart 2 of the shared driveways. He stated that they do not want to break everything apart; they are asking for the flexibility so they can respond to the marketplace.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned Mr. DiFatta was looking for this flexibility

throughout all of the neighborhoods or just the Bantry neighborhood. Mr. DiFatta stated that he would like this flexibility throughout, although the Bantry neighborhood is what he is most concerned about. Mr. Peck stated that Mr. DiFatta may want to continue to look at the other neighborhoods and determine what other changes they would like to make. He suggested that if the Board feels that the proposed changes that will be presented tonight are acceptable, they should concentrate on those changes only. Regarding the architecture, Chairman Dahlquist stated that there was some discussion at the last meeting that would allow new homeowners to bring in their own builder. Mr. DiFatta stated that they are unsure how this will work; they will come back before this Board when they have more details.

Regarding the 5 new home models being proposed, Chairman Dahlquist questioned if any Board member had any questions or concerns. Mr. DiFatta stated that they are looking for the flexibility to be able to move one model home onto a different site as long as it fits and works well on that site. Regarding the new colors for the homes, Mr. DiFatta stated that, although he does not have the samples with him tonight, they are proposing to add a light and medium gray, a light shade of olive green and a light yellow. He stated that they would like to offer more of a variety than just different shades of white.

The Board did not have any concerns with the proposed architecture or colors. Chairman Dahlquist questioned if any Board member had any comments or concerns regarding eliminating the shared driveways and separating the duplexes on the site.

Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that the proposed separation of the driveways works and looks fine, although he stated that he is disappointed with the arrangement of the 5 units in the middle. In the previous plan, there seems to be an order to them; he feels that the proposed plan looks disruptive in terms of how the driveways and units are arranged. Chairman Dahlquist stated that the proposed setup gives dominance to the garages; this is essentially a series of 5 garages. The original plan made an attempt to conceal the overhead doors to some degree. Mr. DiFatta stated that there is the option of turning some of the garages into side-load garages. The Board members agreed that this would help.

Commissioner Bond questioned what the distance was between the houses. Mr. DiFatta stated that there is a minimum of 15 feet between the units, although they try to keep a 15-20 foot distance at the closest point.

Regarding the flexibility to make these changes, Mr. DiFatta stated that he is looking for flexibility to put different house models on different sites and to make changes to the driveways, if needed, without coming back before this Board. Commissioner Gray stated that he would not be comfortable with

the applicant not having to come back in for changes to the driveways.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that although the Board is sympathetic with the issues and would like to make this easy without having the applicant come back before the Board every month regarding changes, the Board has some concerns where there might be a better solution.

Commissioner Carroll stated that, from the beginning, he did not like the configuration where all of the blacktop is in the front yard. He suggested that this be avoided where possible.

Commissioner Stewart stated that the DRB does not want to micromanage this project. They would like to be in a position to have faith in the fact that the applicant is sensitive to the overall intent of the site plan. Chairman Dahlquist stated that, regarding the proposed plan for the circle, the separation between the driveways is less than the width of the buildings. He suggested that a statement could be made that driveway separation has to be at least as wide, if not more, than the width of the building. Mr. DiFatta stated that this would be fine when the road is straight; this is much more difficult when the units are on a curve.

Mr. Peck stated that if the Board would like to, they could give the applicant a list of performance standards that they would need to abide by when making any changes.

Commissioner Carroll made a motion to waive the formal application process. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Commissioner Stewart made a motion that the following referral be made to the Zoning Commission: that the Design Review Board finds this application substantially consistent with the intent and principles of the Guidelines for Community Design, and recommends the following three conditions: 1) a separation of the driveways throughout the ongoing development, that all driveways should be no closer of the minimum width of the required distance between the individual units; 2) the developer will make every effort to not develop any, what are known as, "snout houses"; and 3) the developer will endeavor, in every case, to use side loaded garages whenever possible in order to eliminate the situation of many parallel driveways. Commissioner Stephenson seconded the motion.

Commissioner Carroll questioned if this criteria would be reviewed at the permit stage. Mr. Peck stated that this is worded in such a way that there is a degree of flexibility with regard to certain things. Commissioner Carroll questioned if it would be appropriate to say that this criteria will be reviewed at the permit process time and that if there is any doubt, then the applicant will have to come back before the DRB.

Commissioner Stewart amended his motion to add that, as previously discussed, the Board approves the adoption of the five new models that were presented at this meeting and the previous meeting. In addition, the Board understands that it will be the responsibility of the developer to seek approval from the appropriate Town staff on the various site situations for each individual unit as they come up for approval. Commissioner Stephenson seconded the amendment. The motion and amendment were unanimously approved.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that another informal presentation will be heard tonight.

Jim Martocchio from Martocchio Music, which is located in Riverdale Farms in Avon, stated that he would like to relocate his business to One Massaco Street, Simsbury. He would like to close on that location on March 15th and start running the business on April 1st. He stated that a fire escape is needed for the second floor at this location. This is needed because he would like to use the second floor as studios. Mr. Martocchio stated that they are trying not to destroy any portion of the house during this process. He stated that they have come up with an alternative to get people out of the second floor.

Mr. Martocchio showed the Board members pictures of the exterior and interior of the house and of his proposed plans. He stated that he is proposing to come out on the second floor above the pantry, walk across and then come down a set of stairs. In the future, there will also be an expansion to get people out of the third floor, which has been taken into consideration. He stated that the roof will be taken out and rated material will be installed. He stated that several windows will also be taken out in order to be at code. He would like to put lattice work and plantings in place for aesthetics. He stated that this can be done in stages, which is more cost effective for him.

Commissioner Carroll questioned if the proposed door is closer to the corner of the building than the window was. Mr. Martocchio stated that it was closer because they have to keep in mind future renovations for the third floor. He stated that they will be installing a 30" fire door with correct railings on the landing.

Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that he did not like this proposal. He questioned why he did not propose having a straight stairway going down. Mr. Martocchio stated that aesthetically, he did not believe it should be done that way. He stated that he would rather do it this way if it would be acceptable to the Board. Commissioner Schoenhardt stated that he should pay close attention to the details and character and how the roof

intersects. He stated that he would rather see a gable roof instead of a flat roof.

Commissioner Stephenson stated that he did not like this proposal also. He stated that there are a number of bad examples of this kind of stairway on buildings that really make a mess of the architecture. He stated that he is not convinced that what is being proposed has to be grouped in with these bad examples.

Commissioner Stewart stated that he does not feel that there is enough sensitivity to the structure, although he supports the idea of being able to make these changes at a reasonable cost. He would like the applicant to look at alternatives that are much more architecturally appropriate. Commissioner Bond agreed.

Chairman Dahlquist believes the preference would be to come off the back of the house with a different scenario. He stated that this is a very good looking building in the middle of Town; they have concerns about preserving the integrity of these buildings.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that no action would be taken tonight.

IV. DISCUSSION

a. Charrette Subcommittee update on progress for Simsbury Center activities

Chairman Dahlquist stated that they are still waiting for responses from the three consultants. Mr. Peck stated that the Town should have this information by next week.

b. Open discussion on possible projects for the DRB to undertake for 2009

This discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

c. New Draft (PAD) Planned Area Development Regulation

Mr. Peck distributed the most recent draft of the Planned Area Development Regulation (PAD). This regulation was drafted by the Town Attorney based upon other regulations throughout the State. It provides for mixed/use developments of various sizes. Mr. Peck stated that he feels there needs to be a regulation that will be adaptable to small sites so it can be used for infill as well and not just for large sites. He stated that the word, "large" may come out of the regulation.

He asked that the DRB review this document. The Zoning Commission would like to get feedback from them in the near future.

Chairman Dahlquist questioned what was motivating this Regulation. Mr. Peck stated that the Board of Selectmen gave a model regulation from another Town to the Town Attorney and asked him to draft this regulation.

Mr. Peck stated that a consultant came in and gave a preliminary presentation on the incentive housing zone under the Home Connecticut Legislation. He stated that he has put together some background information on the incentive housing zone, which he distributed to the Board members. He stated that there are approximately 18 property owners who have expressed interest in this. They will probably be able to study 3-6 of these properties.

Chairman Dahlquist stated that this will be discussed at the next meeting.

d. Gateway Sign Review

Chairman Dahlquist stated that this review has been finished.

V. CORRESPONDENCE

There were none.

VI. STAFF REPORTS

There were none.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES of January 27, 2009

Commissioner Drapelick made a motion to approve the January 27, 2009 minutes as written. Commissioner Bond seconded the motion, which was approved. Commissioner Carroll abstained.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Stephenson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Drapelick seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.